



Weekly wrap up

Friday, September 23, 2005

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Magnolia Girls Get All Wrapped Up in Hurricane Relief

I am a resource case manager for Davidson County and one of the agencies that I work with is an agency called Magnolia Academy (Official Name is Alternative Youth Services). They have a foster care program, a male emergency shelter, and two female group homes. On September 15th, I went to the Academy to do my Utilization Review of their programs. This process includes going over each child's chart, reviewing the services received, noting potential barriers to permanence and a general over-all view of each child's progress. I want to share with the staff what I observed when I went into the two female group homes.

Many, many Americans were deeply moved by the images of the massive destruction and the heroic rescues of the victims of Hurricane Katrina. The female residents of two group homes in Lewisburg, Tn. were no exception. They saw the need--and they wanted to help. An idea was suggested that they crochet blankets (or afghans) to be distributed to the evacuees. The girls excitedly took on the project. But they needed plenty of yarn and most did not know how to crochet. Staff assisted by purchasing yarn for the project and teaching the girls the fine art of "knit 1, pearl 2". They found them to be eager learners.

This was clearly evident during a recent visit by DCS to the two group homes involved in the project. Almost all the residents were observed, "crocheting away" at their blankets; and they proudly displayed what they had done. When they are through there will be a colorful array of blankets that can be distributed to the needy, displaced victims of this terrible hurricane.

And it appears that the girls' enthusiasm is contagious. A little bird told the DCS worker that some of the male residents of the shelter have now begun to inquire about the possibility of taking crochet lessons. It looks like they don't want to be left out of the loop. (There goes the male/female stereotype).

But it's all for a good cause and I think that the Magnolia Girls Program--staff and residents-- are to be applauded for their compassion for others less fortunate.

--Carol Wiser

This week's message is an example of putting Values into Action.

A Mid-Cumberland Region employee who recently attended the training provided by Denise Goodman writes:

"I wanted to share a success I had recently. I went to see one of my children at their daycare. This child's teacher asked me about becoming a resource parent. I had my badge with me, and I went over the requirements. I then directed her to contact our FPSU workers here and I also took her name and number and gave them to our FPSU here as well. They did contact her, and she is still interested!"

-Kelley Davidson, CM2-Dickson/Houston/Humphreys

This is a fine example of operationalizing the concept "Recruitment is Everybody's Business" and it came about through the natural course of conducting our daily work. Kudos to Kelley!

--Frank Mix

Hamilton County DCS Holds Annual Community Forum

Hamilton County DCS held a community forum on Thursday, August 25, 2005 at the Bethlehem Center in Chattanooga. Key DCS staff and area Community Partners came together to share resources and information. Jackie Jolley, Hamilton County Regional Administrator presented the Regional Implementation Plan along with information on how DCS can build stronger ties with the community. Mrs. Jolley presented a Power Point slide show providing statistical and other pertinent information on the children entering state custody in Hamilton County. Information was shared with community participants regarding the need for their assistance in recruiting DCS resource homes within selected zip codes, those that will accept large sibling groups, minorities and the teen population.

Guest speaker Alan Green shared his experience as a child in state custody.

A number of community participants came together to share resources and information on working with the families of Hamilton County. Committees were established to work on five key areas of need. The regions plan to continue reaching out to the community to help our children and families.

--Debi Lee

ANSWERING THE CALL MEDIA CAMPAIGN REACHES OUT TO FAMILIES

Over 160 Tennessee families have “answered the call” to inquire about being an adoptive or foster care resource for children through the Adopt Us Kids media campaign. REACT, the Resource Exchange for Adoptable Children in Tennessee, contracts with Adopt US Kids to head up the Recruitment Response Team (RRT), to ensure that families living in Tennessee who respond to a national ad campaign receive a prompt and courteous response, and are connected with the RRT representatives in local DCS offices who can answer their questions about becoming resource parents.

The ad campaign, which uses the slogan, “You don’ t have to be perfect to be a resource parent”, was developed by Adopt Us Kids, a national agency, in collaboration with The Ad Council and a New York advertising agency. The campaign issues a call-to-action for family-oriented Americans to consider adopting a child out of the foster care system and increase public awareness in general about the children who wait for permanency. This campaign includes public service ads for television, radio, print and Internet. The campaign began airing in July 2004 and will continue to air on media outlets throughout the United States during the new two years.

It is important to note that since the day Hurricane Katrina landed on the Gulf Coast region, REACT has received more than 50 inquiries from families throughout Tennessee who are interested in opening their home and becoming a potential resource family for children who have been displaced from their family due to Hurricane Katrina. The referrals have come from families calling the Adopt Us Kids toll-free number. When contacted, many of these families have expressed an interest in learning more about becoming a foster or adoptive parent for children in Tennessee. The families have been referred to the recruitment team in their region for information on how to start the process to become a licensed resource parent.

If you have not seen or heard the public service announcements and would like to view them, please go to www.adcouncil.org , click on Campaigns (left column) and Adoption (right column). The PSA’s are listed on the right. Also, if you are interested in helping to get these PSA’s aired on the media outlets in your area, please e-mail Brian Tuverson at Brian.Tuverson@state.tn.us

-Brian Tuverson